Approval of Drawing Corrections with corrected Figures 23(al) through 23(d2), 24(a), and 24(b). Accordingly, approval of the corrections designating Figures 23(al) through 23(d2), 24(a), and 24(b) as "PRIOR ART" is in order, and is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 - 6 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Here, the Examiner states that it is unclear whether the applicants are claiming the combination of a bucket tooth and a fastening bolt, whether the axial force fluctuation means is a part of the bucket tooth, or whether the axial force fluctuation means is a part of the fastening bolt.

The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection. In response, the applicants have amended claim 1 in order to make clear that the bucket tooth is being claimed.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding indefiniteness rejection under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

As to the merits of this case, claim 1 is rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Ruvang (U.S. Patent No. 5,564,206). The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

Ruvang describes a bucket tooth (10) attached to a bucket lip (28). The bucket tooth is slid over the bucket lip to align holes in the bucket tooth with a hole in the bucket lip. A threaded bolt

(36) which engages a wedge shaped connector member (34) passes through the aligned holes to secure the bucket tooth to the bucket lip. An elongated rectangular flat adjusting spring member (38) is positioned between a head of the bolt (36) and a side (24) of the bucket tooth. The adjusting spring member (38) provides an axial force fluctuation absorbing means to absorb fluctuations in axial force of the fastening bolt after attaching the bucket tooth to the bucket lip.

The applicants' present invention is distinguishable over Ruvang because in the present invention the bucket tooth itself provides the axial force fluctuation absorbing means without an additional component (spring member) as in the device of Ruvang.

Accordingly, since not all of the claimed elements, as now set forth in claim 1, as amended, are found in exactly the same situation and united in the same way to perform the identical function in Ruvang's apparatus, there can be no anticipation under 35 USC §102(b) of the applicant's claimed invention, as now set forth in claim 1, based on Ruvang.

Thus, the withdrawal of the outstanding anticipation rejection under 35 USC §102(b) based on Ruvang (U.S. Patent No. 5,564,206) is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

Claims 1 - 6 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurer et al. (U.S. No. 4,360,982) in view of Rose et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,958,970). The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

Maurer et al. describes a bucket tooth (60) attached to a bucket lip (36) with use of bolt (63). Maurer et al. does not describe any axial force fluctuation absorbing means for absorbing fluctuations in axial force of the fastening bolt.

Rose et al. describes graduated-load spring washers for screws and threaded fasteners. The spring washers of Rose et al. are disposed between a component being fastened and a head of the screw or bolt. The Examiner alleges that a spring washer of Rose et al. provided on the bolt of Maurer et al. would provide an axial force fluctuation absorbing means as defined in the present claimed invention. The assembly of the combined references has a component which is separate from the bucket tooth (spring washer) which is necessary for providing the axial force fluctuation absorbing means for absorbing fluctuations in axial force as compared with the present invention wherein the absorbing means is a part of the bucket tooth.

The Examiner alleges in paragraphs 2 and 3 of section 7 of the Office Action that Rose et al. discloses warp and spot facing found in present claims 2 - 6. The applicants respectfully submit, however, that those features are in the separate devices discussed above, and not in the bucket tooth itself.

In view of the above, even if, *arguendo*, the teachings of Maurer et al. and Rose et al. can be combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, such combined teachings of such references would still fall far short in fully meeting applicants' claimed invention, as now set forth in claims 1 - 6. Accordingly, a person of ordinary skill in the art would not have found the applicants' claimed invention obvious under 35 USC §103(a) based on Maurer et al. and Rose et al., singly or in combination.

In view of the above, the withdrawal of the outstanding obviousness rejection under 35 USC §103(a) based on Maurer et al. (U.S. No. 4,360,982) in view of Rose et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,958,970) is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

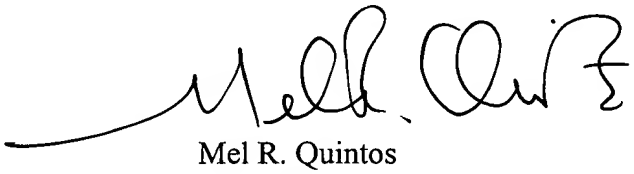
If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the title of the invention and the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**Version with markings to show changes made**."

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully Submitted,

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN & HATTORI, LLP



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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Enclosures: Version with markings to show changes made
Request for Approval of Drawing Changes

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE 09/725,314

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Amended) [A] In an assembly having a bucket tooth attached to a bucket lip via a fastening bolt, said bucket tooth comprising axial force fluctuation absorbing means for absorbing fluctuations in axial force of said fastening bolt after attaching said bucket tooth to said bucket lip.